



INTRODUCTION TO FOUNDATION PIECING FLYING GEESE BLOCK AND PLACEMAT



Welcome to foundation piecing! This short lesson will give you step-by-step instructions to complete a simple, yet favorite, block. For this lesson you can use either the large or small Flying Geese foundation pattern.

NEEDED MATERIALS:

To complete the block you will need:

- Printed copy of the Flying Geese foundation block pattern
- Triangular fabric pieces approximately 3 inches wide by 2 inches tall
- Standard sewing machine needle
- Thread – neutral color, 40 or 50 weight
- Cutting mat, rotary cutter, cutting edge/ruler
- Bright window light or a sewing light
- Tweezers
- Seam ripper...maybe

MACHINE SET UP:

Setting up your machine for foundation piecing, or paper-piecing, requires little time. You can use a standard straight stitch foot and size 12 or 14 needle. I recommend a size 40 – 50 weight, neutral color thread, such as tan or gray. You will want to set your stitch length to be very, very short; you will see why later. You will need to experiment with what works with your machine.



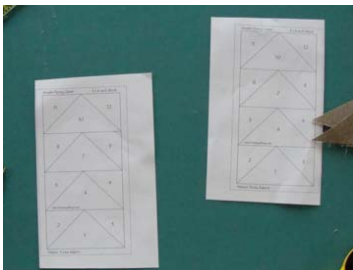
GETTING STARTED:

When you do foundation piecing you will be sewing your fabric right on the paper pattern, hence paper-piecing, which allows you to sew very precise and small pieces. After your block is complete you will carefully remove the paper.

You do not need to buy any special paper for your first project. I did my first paper-pieced projects right on standard paper without any problem. The paper is not as easy to remove and may dull your needle more quickly than paper specifically made for foundation piecing, but for your first project you can use copy paper and create perfect foundation pieced blocks.

STEP ONE: Copy the pattern

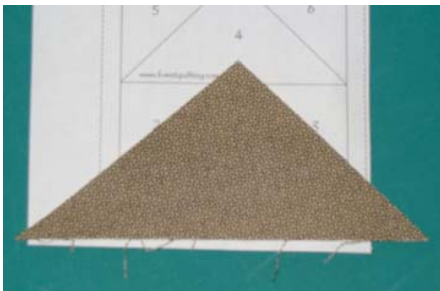
Print a copy of the pattern page and cut the block patterns apart.



STEP TWO: Fabric selection

Choose fabric pieces that will be large enough to cover the 'pieces' in the flying geese block. I believe pressing the fabric is essential for foundation piecing. I also am a firm believer in starching, especially when foundation piecing.

Cut a triangular piece of fabric to generously cover the #1 space.



STEP THREE: The first piece

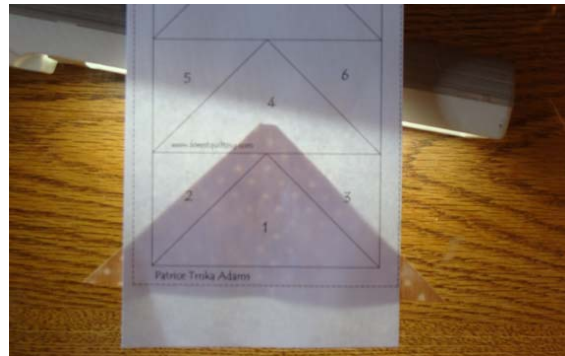
With paper-piecing you will piece in order of the numbers on the pattern. Always start with number 1. Most foundation patterns, including this one, require using a $\frac{1}{4}$ inch seam allowance.

You will be sewing on the printed side and your fabric will be on the unprinted side. You will be building your block on the unprinted side of the paper pattern. This is one reason foundation piecing can be considered complicated. The printed side of the pattern is the back so all foundation patterns are in 'reverse'. The Flying Geese is the same on both sides so for this pattern you will not see any difference between the front and the back.

Lining up your fabric on the paper for sewing is also a challenge. We will be using that bright window light or sewing light and folding to help line up the fabric with the stitching lines.

For the first piece in the block I recommend trimming the chosen fabric to generously cover that piece, the number 1 space.

Place the fabric, right side up, on the unprinted side of the pattern. Hold the pattern and fabric up to the light source. Using the shadow of the fabric to guide the fabric placement, position the fabric to completely cover the space. Carefully hold the fabric in place.



Stabilize your first piece of fabric over the #1 space by either using water-soluble glue from a stick to secure the fabric to the paper or run three or four long stitches through the middle of the piece to sew it right to the paper. Later you can easily remove those stitches. I recommend for your first blocks you stabilize the first piece. With larger blocks you may be able to use pins to secure the first piece. As you become more skilled you may not need to stabilize your first piece.

STEP FOUR: Adding the second piece

With the second piece you will begin sewing. Finally!

Once you get to this point you will basically be **folding, trimming, placing next piece of fabric, sewing, and finger pressing**. Keep that rotary cutter and mat close by.

Here is where lots of pictures will help.

FOLDING

Lay the block pattern line-side up (fabric on the underside) on your cutting mat. Fold the paper along the seam line that separates piece number 1 and number 2. Fold the paper flat. Do not fold the fabric.

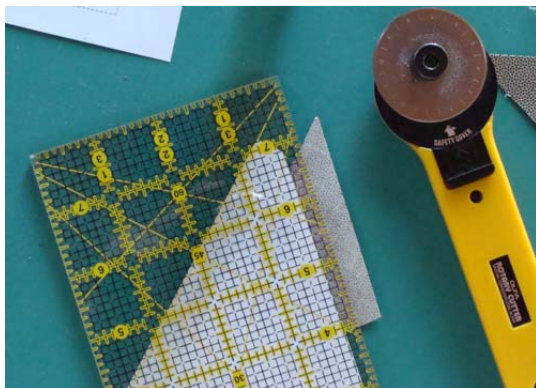


In this picture you can see I have glued my first piece of fabric to the pattern, but the fabric is much too large. I want to trim off excess fabric along the seam line between pieces #1 and #2 to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch.

Fabric down and lined side of pattern up I fold the pattern on the #1 and #2 seam line so I can use the folded edge to line up my ruler to trim the fabric to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch.

TRIMMING

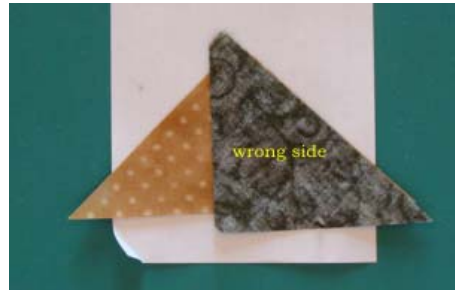
Lay a straight edge rotary cutter ruler along the folded edge and trim the fabric to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch of the seam line. The $\frac{1}{4}$ inch of extra fabric will be your seam allowance.



PLACING FABRIC

Choose or cut a piece of fabric that will generously cover piecing area 2.

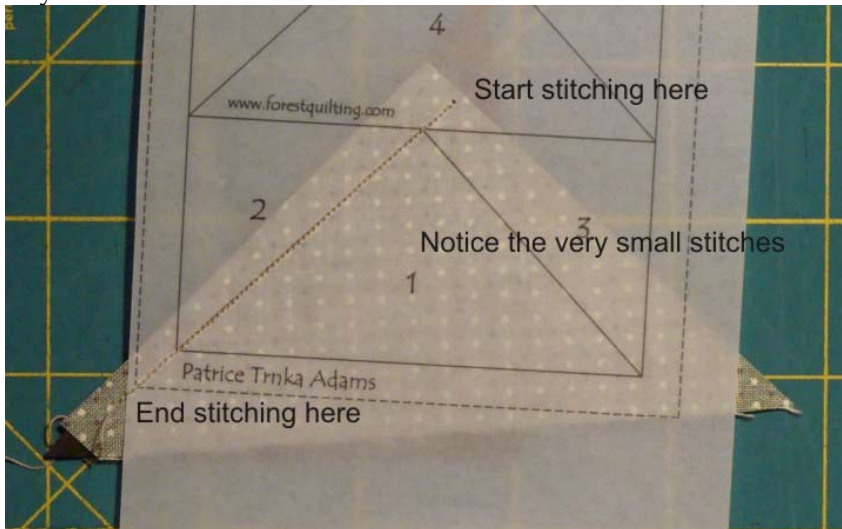
Lay the block fabric-side up on your work surface. Lay your fabric piece #2 wrong side up on top of piece #1 (so right sides are together). Line up the edges of fabric pieces #1 and #2 along the line between the number 1 and 2 seam line.



Pin in place.

SEWING

Turn pattern over line-side up and position to begin stitching $\frac{1}{4}$ inch in front of the seam line between #1 and #2. You do not need to backstitch or tie off these stitch lines. Stitch right on the seam line between #1 and #2 pieces. Sew $\frac{1}{4}$ " beyond the seam line.



Notice the paper used here is a velum-like paper made for paper piecing. See how you can see through the paper. A package of this runs about \$10 for 25 sheets. It is wonderful to work with when piecing, but expensive.

FINGER PRESSING

Turn block over so the fabric-side is up. Fold the fabric piece #2 over to lay flat. Finger press the fabric on the seam line between #1 and #2.



If you have used small, small stitches you should not see any of your stitches when you finger press your seam open. With larger stitches you will see the stitches and the gaps in between. If you can see your stitches, shorten your stitch length. For smaller, tiny pieces or blocks this is particularly important.

STEP FIVE: Adding the third piece, same as the second!

FOLDING

Lay the block line side up (fabric side down) on your cutting mat. Fold the paper along the seam line that separates piece #2 and #3. Do not fold the fabric.

TRIMMING

Lay a straight edge rotary cutter ruler along the folded edge and trim the fabric to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch of the seam line.

PLACING FABRIC

Choose or cut a piece of fabric that will generously cover piecing area #3.

Lay the block fabric-side up on your work surface. Lay your fabric piece #3 wrong side up on top of piece #1 (so right sides are together). Line up the edges of the fabrics.



Pin in place.

SEWING

Turn pattern over line-side up and position to begin stitching $\frac{1}{4}$ inch in front of the seam line between #2 and #3. You do not need to backstitch or tie off these stitch lines. Stitch right on the seam line between #2 and #3 pieces. Sew $\frac{1}{4}$ " beyond the seam line.

FINGER PRESSING

Turn block over so the fabric-side is up. Fold the fabric piece #3 over to lay flat. Finger press the fabric on the seam line between #2 and #3.

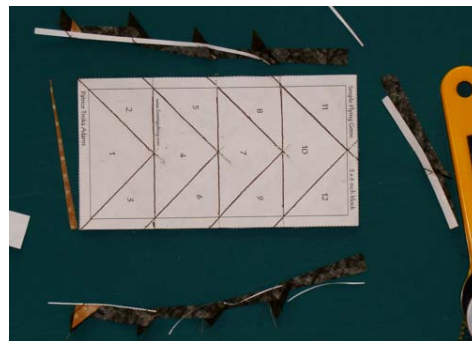


STEP SIX: COMPLETE THE BLOCK

Continue the block using the same steps of folding, trimming, adding fabric, sewing and finger pressing until all the pieces have been added.



Once the block is complete, use a ruler and rotary cutter to trim the block leaving a $\frac{1}{4}$ inch seam allowance. DO NOT REMOVE THE PAPER.



Leave the paper on the block until the block has been sewn together with other blocks, sashing or border in the project.

STEP SEVEN: REMOVING THE PAPER

The very short stitches used with paper-piecing nearly cut the paper. A bit of tugging or folding will usually complete the tear and the paper is easy to remove. For small corners where small pieces of the paper remain use a tweezers to remove.

Paper specially made for foundation piecing is considerably more expensive than copy paper, but is 'crisper' and is easier to remove.

STEP EIGHT: CONGRATULATE YOURSELF!!

Congratulations, you have successfully completed your first foundation pieced block. May this be the first of many!!

ADDITIONAL NOTE: RIPPING

Making a mistake when sewing a foundation piece block is something you want to avoid! Ripping is slow because the stitches are so small. The paper will often break apart on the perforated seam line making re-sewing that seam difficult. Copy paper is actually more forgiving and will handle ripping better than Foundation Piecing Paper because it is softer and less apt to fall apart on the perforated seam.

ADDITIONAL NOTE: PAPER AND COPYING

I don't use copy paper for my foundation piecing projects. I use either foundation piecing paper, my favorite, or Mead erasable typing paper. I can only find erasable typing paper at one drug store in my town. It works very well and is much less expensive than foundation paper. Both papers are slightly transparent so I can see better through the paper for placing fabric and both are 'crisper' and easier to remove.

When you copy or print your patterns always check to see if they are printing out true to size. Don't print copies of blocks for one project on different copy machines or printers. Some copy machines or printers may distort the size slightly. Mixing printed blocks that have been printed on different machines could cause problems, especially on projects where many blocks are sewn together.

For free foundation patterns visit my web site at www.forestquilting.com

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Patrice Trnka Adams

FOREST QUILTING

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SIMPLE FLYING GEESSE

September 2008

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Flying Geese Placemat

12.5 x 20.5 inches

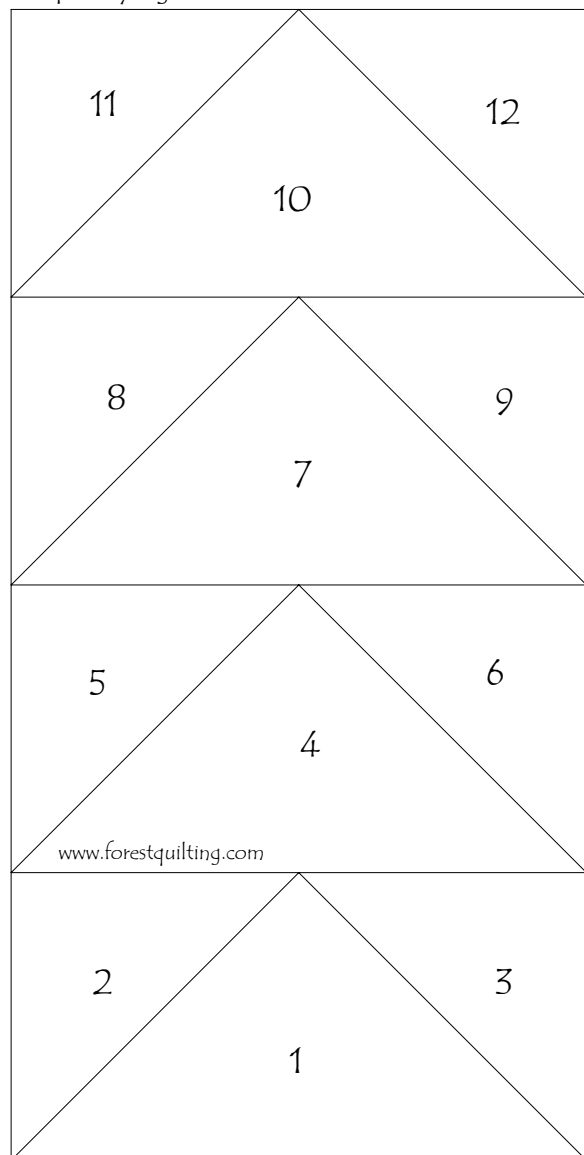
4 Flying Geese blocks

Center block = 12 x 14 inches (finished)

Binding = 1/4 inch

Simple Flying Geese

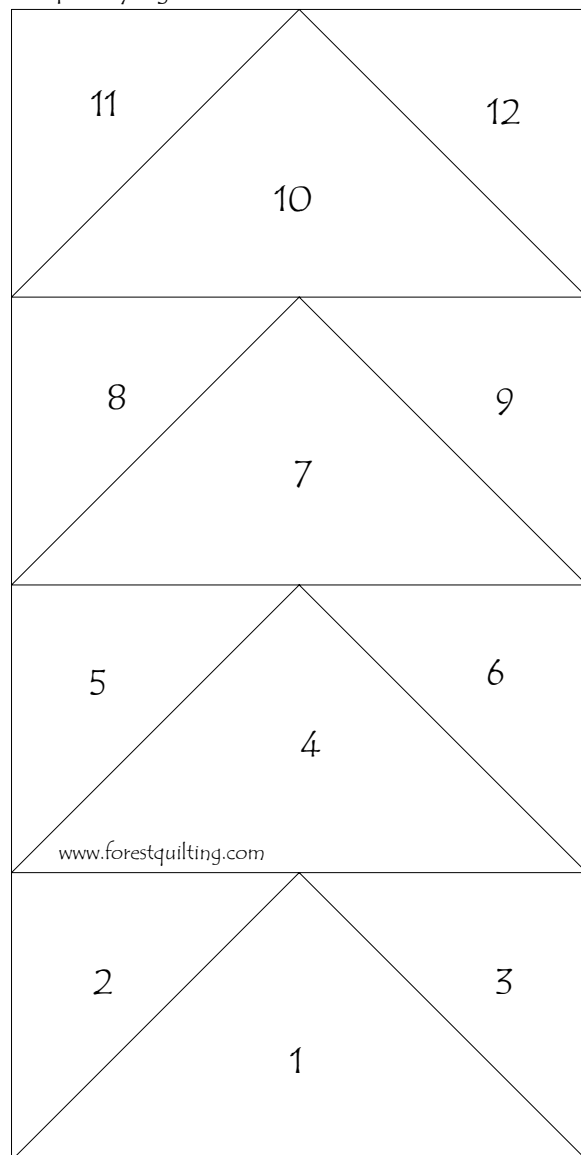
3 x 6 inch block



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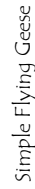
Simple Flying Geese

3 x 6 inch block



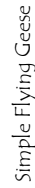
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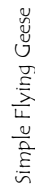
2.5 x 5 inch block

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2.5 x 5 inch block

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2.5 x 5 inch block

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